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INAUGURAL MESSAGE
of
THE
HONORABLE DAN THORNTON
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO
Delivered to the
Thirty-ninth
COLORADO LEGISLATURE
in Joint Session



AT DENVER
JANUARY 13, 1953

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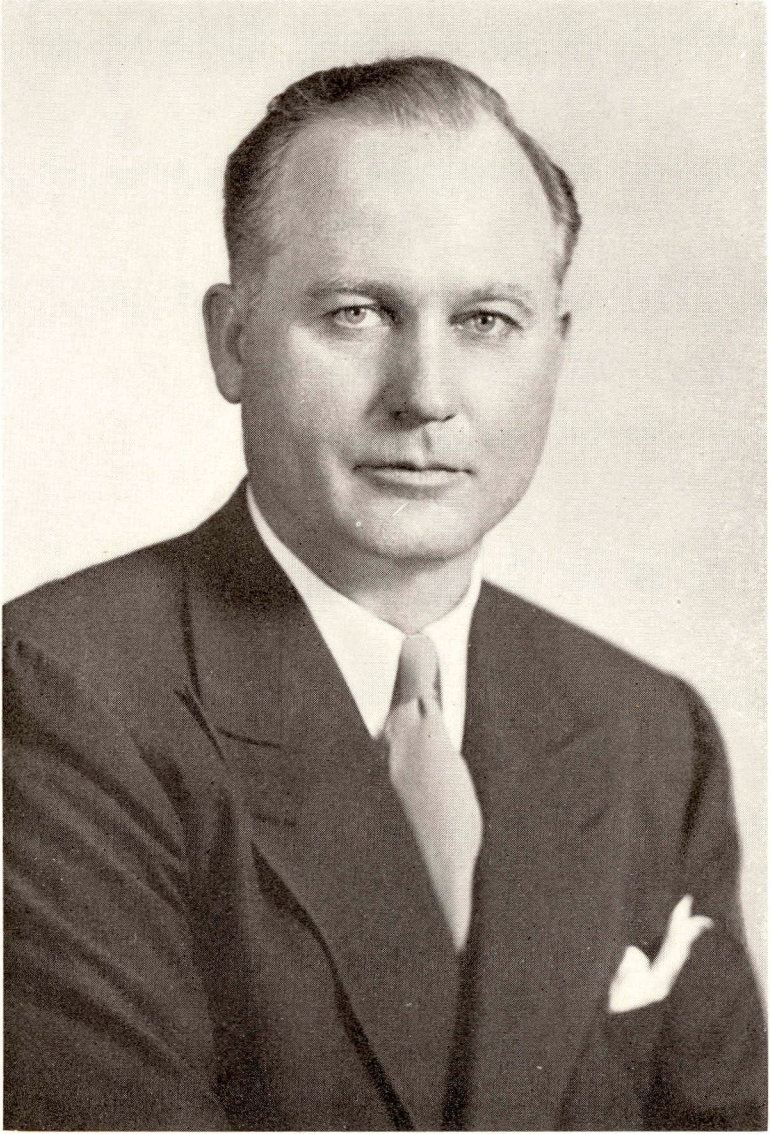


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GOVERNOR DAN THORNTON

INAUGURAL MESSAGE OF HON. DAN THORNTON,
GOVERNOR OF COLORADO

BEFORE THE JOINT SESSION OF THE THIRTY-NINTH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*Members of the Thirty-ninth General Assembly,
Ladies and Gentlemen:*

Last Wednesday it was my pleasure to welcome you as you met to perform your duties as legislators. Again, I am honored in repeating that welcome. It is now my privilege to give you my views on certain grave problems affecting our state.

As we meet today the sinister shadow of the Korean war continues to sober our thoughts and to emphasize the world-wide struggle between two opposing philosophies of government. We pray to God for an early and honorable peace, but we also dedicate our wholehearted and continued efforts to the preservation of our American way of life and the protection of individual liberty. Good government does not begin at the federal level, but it does begin at the local and state levels.

We have learned the hard way that centralization of power in Washington is not good for America. To my way of thinking, it is imperative that the states retain their rights and their powers and assume their responsibilities. This is a fundamental safeguard if we are to preserve our American way of life and protect our individual liberties and privileges. I expect the Federal Government to keep out of state business.

There is a desire on the part of the incoming national administration to clearly define between state and federal functions. It is our privilege, as officials of state government to participate in the making of this governmental history. However, we must have willing hands and able minds.

Two years ago I was privileged to discuss with the members of the Thirty-eighth General Assembly what then seemed to me to be the most serious problems facing our state and the record shows that most of my recommendations were favorably considered by them, and I sincerely believe that great progress has been made.

The voters at the last general election gave certain definite mandates to us and I have those things in mind when I make the following suggestions and recommendations to this Assembly.

STATE FINANCES

It is impossible to discuss the problems confronting the state without two questions arising; "How much will it cost?" and "Where's the money coming from?" Colorado's major problem today is one of revenue and expenditures. I am not unmindful of my statements of two years when I said that we must preserve and protect the general fund and surplus of our state and that economy must be the primary objective of our administration and my equally important statement that the people must not be burdened with additional taxes except in case of *extreme* emergency.

It is impossible to appropriate more money year after year than we take in and I say to you today that we must limit expenditures to income. Families and business men find it necessary to restrict their spending and live within their incomes. The State of Colorado must do the same. Keep this in mind, if you appropriate more in this legislative session than we have coming in, you must provide additional revenue. I will not permit the cash surplus of this state to be liquidated while I am Governor.

Why do I say this? The reason is obvious. The state has to have a cash balance of at least ten million dollars on hand in order to fulfill the obligations with which it is charged. For example: The School Finance Act requires that substantial amounts of money be paid to the school districts of this state on specified dates and it happens that these dates do not fall in the months of greatest general fund revenue collections. When these and other payments are made, the cash balance in the General Fund declines and even fluctuates millions of dollars. It is entirely possible that during the next few weeks, that balance will go down to seven million dollars. That's surprising isn't it, when everyone hears that we have a General Fund surplus of 17 million dollars.

To be certain that the state can carry on its normal and required financial activities, I am asking this Thirty-ninth General Assembly to establish, by legislative action, a revolving fund of at least 10 million dollars, to be transferred from the surplus into a permanent "*working capital*" fund. It is time to take action and face the facts of our financial life.

There has been made available to you—and I hope all of you read it carefully—a voluminous budget report most important in its content. Certain charts contained in the first few pages will be especially interesting and instructive to you new members of the legislature because you will see that less than 17 cents out of each dollar of all state income goes to the General Fund for appropriation by the legislature. Therefore, the

General Assembly is restricted to 17 per cent of the state's income in making its appropriations. It is easy to understand how you are placed in an economic vise, or an economic straight jacket, if you please. On this basis, you have been made 17 per centers—I would hesitate to even intimate that you are 17 per cent legislators, because in my book you are 100 per cent legislators.

I can assure you of two things—that as long as this condition exists we cannot effect any substantial reduction in taxes nor can we increase our appropriations for such needed services as education, health and other improvements.

The fact must be faced, that we cannot spend money at a greater rate than we are taking it in. On that basis, first things must come first until the income for the year has been exhausted. If a greater amount of money is needed for the essential functions of the state, it is the responsibility of this legislature to find new fields of tax revenue.

We have discussed and have seen the evils of earmarked funds. I call your attention to the fact that all of our earmarked funds are not by Constitution, many are by statute. A complete review of these statutes should be considered by you, to the end that more funds should be made available to the General Fund from other sources. I believe that you and I should attack and solve these problems wherever they exist. We cannot accept a do-nothing attitude. Progress is not made by sitting idly by.

SEVERANCE TAX

Colorado has become a major oil and gas producing state. We want that industry to continue to flourish and expand for the economic good of our state. However, it is important that that industry or any other industry be taxed fairly and equitably. In other words, they should pay their fair share of the cost of government and the state should be compensated for the depletion of a great natural resource. I am convinced that the people of Colorado defeated the constitutional amendment pertaining to the severance tax because the revenues would have been earmarked. The oil and gas industry, through its leaders, have indicated to me time and again that they will not object to a fair and just tax. I suggest that you establish a legislative committee to hold open hearings, in which, not only the oil and gas industry, but all others who have an interest in this matter might participate. This should be done immediately, in order that the legislature will be able to take action before the end of this session. This must be done so that the people of this state can be assured that they are receiving a fair tax return from the production of this great natural resource.

SCHOOLS

The Thirty-eighth General Assembly made sensible and much-needed revisions in our school laws. Comprehensive and far-reaching school finance legislation was passed. It provided for the unprecedented sum of 12½ million dollars from the General Fund and over 1½ million dollars from other sources, making a total of over 14 million dollars. As Colorado grows and expands, so do our educational needs and problems. The Governor's School Finance Committee has been in session all summer studying these problems and it has made certain recommendations, which I suggest that you take into consideration, bearing in mind Colorado's limited income. I also want to mention the constitutional guarantee that our children are entitled to an education—and this includes those handicapped children who require special provision. I would like to have you give this particular problem special consideration, bearing in mind that the primary responsibility for furnishing this education lies with the local school districts.

There is one place where we can gain additional funds for our schools, and that is through a realistic approach to the leasing of our state-owned lands. This is another *must* for this legislature. The principle of what is best for Colorado must prevail here. You have a committee report to assist you.

We can all be justly proud of our institutions of higher learning, but they, too, face a multitude of problems and are entitled to your most careful consideration lest their high academic standards be endangered.

REORGANIZATION

You members come from nearly every walk of life and you are representative of many occupations, businesses and professions, but for the next two years you will all be very definitely in the business of state government. Our state is big business. I think the time has come in the life of our state when we must recognize the shortcomings of the structure of our state government and that our Constitution is archaic and outmoded in many respects. It is essential that government keep step with progress, to efficiently administer the affairs of the state for the people. I believe that we must reorganize the government of this state to accomplish these aims and objectives. To that end, I shall appoint a committee of 12 persons. It will be composed of four members of the Senate, four members of the House of Representatives, and four other citizens of the state, with equal political representation from the two major parties.

I do not want any of you, or any citizen, to think that reorganization is a miracle that can be accomplished overnight. I ask all of you to work with this committee. It will be a painstaking task, with many ramifications, and one in which partisan politics should have no place. You can construct and leave a monument of service in the name of the Thirty-ninth General Assembly if you will give this problem your whole-hearted support.

HIGHWAYS

If we are to make permanent progress in the building and maintenance of our highway system in the State of Colorado, we must, in this legislative year, complete the passage of a long-range plan.

The Thirty-eighth General Assembly took the first big step forward in a long-range highway plan by the creation of a State Highway Commission of eight members and provided for the reorganization of the department, which is now in full effect. However, this action is only the first step.

Just two weeks ago I approved and signed the highway budget for the next 18 months, which totaled more than 38 million dollars. In my opinion, there should be a long-range plan for the expenditure of such an amount of money. I maintain that when you are spending 38 million dollars of taxpayers' money there should be a long-range plan, into which it would dovetail, and until we have such a plan, we will be forced to build highways without adequate planning.

You do not cure highway ills by simply appropriating money. There must be a plan for the spending of this money so that the people will know how, when and where roads will be built. Otherwise, the money cannot be used wisely and most effectively. The Governor's Highway Planning Committee has performed a very valuable service for the State of Colorado in preparing such a long-range plan. I wish to take this opportunity to commend this committee for its work. No part of its proposed highway plan should be overlooked in your legislative deliberations. I cannot emphasize this too much.

Right now the Highway Department is engaged in the construction of certain essential super four-lane safety highways and they must be completed at the earliest possible date. Not only must we be concerned with the development of our badly needed four-lane highways, but we must be cognizant of the great need for continued improvement of our farm-to-market, mine-to-market and mill-to-market roads. We must take an over-all viewpoint and be sure that our roads are built

and maintained for all of the people of the state and not just for one section of the state.

In the search for funds to complete these highway projects, I have concluded that we might use anticipation warrants to be paid by future highway user tax revenues, which will assure a much earlier completion date of these projects. One reason I feel that this is so necessary at this time is that Colorado fell so far behind in the construction and maintenance of highways during the war years. This is a method of catching up and regaining lost ground. Through the use of anticipation warrants against highway user tax revenues, we would condense into a shorter space of time the completion of many badly needed important roads and projects. I assure the members of this Legislature and the citizens of Colorado that if this body does approve the use of anticipation warrants, I shall, upon the signing of the bill, call an emergency session of the Highway Commission so that they can make immediate plans to get construction under way as soon as possible.

You and I, as public officials of this State of Colorado, must be concerned with the future progress of this great commonwealth. We must use imagination, and certainly we must have vision of that future greatness which is ours if we properly plan for it.

I can see a great transcontinental super highway stretching from the east to the west coast, and in thinking of this great highway, I harken back to the past. In the early days when this was an expanding nation and civilization was pushing ever westward, Colorado was by-passed on the north and on the south because of our majestic Rocky Mountains. The Oregon Trail on the north and the Santa Fe Trail on the south became the great transportation routes. But, if you and I, as leaders of Colorado, have the vision and the courage, we can assure Colorado and its future generations the great benefits that will accrue from a modern transcontinental highway by planning now for an adequate tunnel under the Continental Divide which will attract our coast-to-coast super highway of the future. If we provide such a tunnel, there will be no excuse for the transcontinental highway to go either north or south of us, but rather directly through the middle of this great state. This coast-to-coast super highway is no pipe dream, nor is it a figment of the imagination, for it stretches across New Jersey, Pennsylvania, into Ohio and plans are under way for its march westward. There are many methods you can consider for the construction of this tunnel—bonds, tolls, anticipation warrants, or even regular highway funds. I say, Fellow Coloradans, it is time that we plan for the future.

REAPPORTIONMENT

Again, I call to your attention that our Constitution directs a reapportionment of representation after every nation-wide census. On a federal level, this realignment of representation is done arbitrarily; on a state level, it is accomplished by legislative action. Last year we failed to make any changes in our assignment of districts as directed by our Constitution. Many hours went into the study of this problem last year; apparently many more hours are necessary. This type of reapportionment is basic to our representative form of government; I ask you to bring about reapportionment in a fair and equitable manner this session.

SALARIES OF STATE EMPLOYEES

The time has come to take a realistic view of the salaries paid all state employees. It has been my practice as a businessman to pay my employees well because my success depended to a large extent upon their efforts. The success of state government depends upon efficient, loyal, and able employees, and due to the high cost of living I ask you to consider a raise in salaries for the employees of the State of Colorado, especially those in the lower grades.

I understand a resolution will be introduced to make a study of salaries, hours, and working conditions, by a legislative committee, and as soon as possible make recommendations to this Assembly. I favor such study and look forward to action being taken on this problem by this legislative body.

WATER RESOURCES

Realizing that our water resources are the most important of all our natural resources, Colorado took the lead in the protection and development of that vital natural resource in 1937 by creating the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Under the leadership of the late Clifford H. Stone, who was the director of that important state agency, Colorado achieved a place of eminence in this field. The machinery established here for the preservation and development of our water resources is the envy of all the western states. Those of us who are familiar with the activities of that department are now aware of the fact that Judge Stone was performing the duties and responsibilities of several men, and it can truthfully be said that he gave his life to the State of Colorado. The work of this agency must go forward and there should be created a new position of assistant director—in order that a part of the director's work and activities can be delegated. It is very important to the citizens of Colorado that we carry on an

aggressive defense of this valuable resource and continue to find ways and means of applying our water to a beneficial use. I recommend that you give consideration to the expanding needs of that department and that adequate funds be appropriated for that purpose, consistent with the financial ability of the state. Always remember that the headwaters of five of America's greatest rivers originate in Colorado and we have the responsibility of protecting our fair share of these waters in every direction.

The growth of Colorado will be in direct proportion to the availability of our water resources, the life blood of this state. In recent years, greater interest and emphasis has been attached to one aspect of our water problem—that of water pollution control.

Realizing the importance of this matter, I did, therefore, shortly after taking office in 1951 appoint a Stream Pollution Control Committee to study all implications of the problem. The committee has submitted its report and proposals for legislation. I urge your serious consideration of this problem, because it affects the health of our people, the future of our manufacturing plants, the future of game, fish and recreational uses, the operations of our mining industry, the relationship of municipalities with water users, our agriculture, and the conservation of our natural resources.

PENAL AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

In the past two years, Colorado has taken great strides toward the improvement of our penal and charitable institutions. New methods of education and training have added greatly to the effectiveness of the programs of these institutions and we must continue that progress. We, in Colorado, believe in the true American approach, which is the salvage of human life and the building of character. Our constant aim must be what is best for each individual in these institutions. A program for the improvement of the physical features and facilities is important. We must add to and expand our rehabilitation program for the inmates so that they may be returned to society as useful citizens. We must have properly trained personnel for carrying out such a program.

I have already mentioned the necessity to review the salaries of our employees. I am aware of the acute situation existing at the State Hospital in regard to securing sufficient psychiatric and other medical help and that further justifies my request for a study of the salary situation. We have an ever-expanding problem at the State Hospital at Pueblo, and I think it would be well to have a team of psychiatrists, doctors, and legislators study the patient load there and determine

how many people are there that should not be there. If there are patients in the hospital that do not belong there, then they must be taken care of in some other manner. Also, a thorough review should be made of the commitment procedures used for sending people to the hospital.

Other than the points I have spoken of, it is imperative that additions be made to the steam plant at the State Hospital, and that additional beds be provided for the State Home and Training School at Ridge.

LABOR

Workmen's compensation benefits were raised to a new high by the Thirty-eighth General Assembly, but in view of the increased cost of living, I ask you to increase these benefits. The same increased cost of living applies to the unemployed and because of it you should look into the benefits paid by unemployment compensation. I understand that increases can be made without increasing the rates paid by employers or without endangering the fund.

Out statutes covering occupational diseases should be given further review. You have a study on this from a legislative interim committee, and their recommendations should be considered. Any workman who loses earning power because of the hazards peculiar to his particular occupation is entitled to consideration by reason of the risk he incurs.

An important issue the past two years has been the sale of prison-made goods. Shortly after the law permitting the sale of prison-made goods on the outside market, there arose serious criticism as to its possible effects upon business and industry competition, as well as labor. At that time, I promised labor and business leaders that no products from the penitentiary would go into competition with privately grown or manufactured products, because other tax-supported institutions can well accept and use any surplus. This promise has been kept and all surpluses have gone to other state institutions. That is good business from the standpoint of a good rehabilitation program at the penitentiary and reformatory, and since laborers are taxpayers there should be no complaint as to this procedure. I want labor and business to know I have kept my promise, and I shall keep it as long as I am Governor.

MINING

Due to the arbitrary attitude of the Federal Government, the mining industry of Colorado and other western states has suffered from unfair competition with the mining industry of other nations improperly subsidized by American tax dollars.

As a result our mining industry is in a serious condition. I think it is most necessary to do everything in our power to rehabilitate this industry. If we are to have an ample supply of critical materials and minerals with which to defend this nation in the time of war, and to contribute to our peace time economy, we must keep our mining industry in a high and healthy state of production. I suggest that we keep continuing state legislative committees busy on the problems that face all phases of the mining industry, both metallic and non-metallic. At this point, I want to commend the work of the synthetic fuels committee for having brought about interest in the development of mining by private capital and investment. Colorado has an opportunity to profit by many millions of dollars in the future through the establishment of synthetic fuel plants and in the development of other great mineral deposits. I urge you to memorialize the Congress of the United States to remove all of the regulations and restrictions which hamper our mining industry and stop spending the American taxpayer's dollar to subsidize foreign mines at the expense of our home industry. Whatever is good for the mining industry, is good for the State of Colorado.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

I am happy and proud to state my belief that the citizens of Colorado are more aware of highway safety right now than ever before. The fact that Colorado was the National Grand Award winner in 1951 should not make us blind to the fact that this is a steady, continuous, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-per-year job. Our death toll last year, 381 men, women and children largely resulted from the additional millions of miles being traveled on Colorado highways and 160,000 more registered motor vehicles placed on them in the last four years. Also, let it be remembered that during 1952 we had one million additional tourists traveling our roads than four years ago. We do have model and effective traffic safety organizations on both local and state levels. However, if we are to help prevent this needless human slaughter, I urge that the Colorado Highway Patrol be authorized to increase its staff by 75 additional patrolmen.

ADVERTISING

We have a great state—the greatest in the Union! The Colorado story is a dynamic and dramatic one. It has been told in the past two years to the benefit of all of the people in the State of Colorado. Whether you are in agriculture, in industry, or in the tourist business, or regardless of your occupation, that story and its telling has helped you. As a matter of fact, in the last two years this state has had a

tremendous increase in dollars and visitors. One-half million more people visited the state and 50 million more dollars came into Colorado in 1952 than in 1950. This is definite proof that advertising pays. I urge this Assembly to appropriate \$300,000 for the next fiscal year, so that we can keep telling the Colorado story.

I obviously cannot discuss all the problems in detail that are facing Colorado. I have pointed out to you, however, a major program of thirteen points. In addition to this program, I would like to call to your attention some other matters which you must consider for the welfare of our state and the furtherance of good government.

Office Building Space. A Building Committee, composed of state officials and legislators has made two proposals as part of a long-range building plan. I urge your approval of these proposals, the first of which would authorize construction of a new building for the Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of Revenue. This would materially assist that department in its space problem and would consolidate two or three activities which should be together. The second proposal would authorize the purchase of land in the immediate vicinity of the Capitol Buildings Group for future use.

Interstate Cooperation. For two years I have had the privilege of being a member of the Executive Committee of the National Governor's Conference, which works closely with the Council of State Governments. The council, under its Board of Managers, has developed a schedule of suggested appropriations for each state—a schedule based on population. Our membership fee, so to speak, in this organization, is \$3,000.00 per year. We have never paid it but have consistently used the fine services of the council. I urge that this amount be made available for this purpose. We have used the experience and knowledge of the council many times—we will have many occasions to do so in the future. I point out to you that it will be of great assistance to us in our task of state reorganization.

Civil Defense. Our Civil Defense Program must be maintained at its high level of efficiency due to world conditions. We must recognize that this generation is living under conditions unlike those to which any preceding generation was ever subjected, and if we are to be able to combat Communism and its encroachment on all fronts, it is important that our civilian population be trained for that battle!

Revision of Our Statutes. The revision of our statutes, as authorized by the Thirty-eighth General Assembly should be completed.

Game and Fish. Our program for the improvement of hunting and fishing for both our citizens and visitors should be continued. They comprise two of our most valuable recreational activities.

Veterans. There are many problems which confronts the veteran. We have recently instituted a program, as authorized by Congress, to give the benefits of education, training, and rehabilitation to Colorado veterans who have served in Korea. We must be ever mindful of the sacrifices made by members of our military forces. I am also concerned about the condition of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Homelake. It should be the responsibility of this body to determine whether to continue the Home in its present functions or abandon it altogether. Whatever is done should be done through the close cooperation of our veterans and their organizations.

Agriculture. Agriculture remains as the number one industry of Colorado which will justify your continual review of its various problems. One specific suggestion would be the passing of an adequate weights and measures law to protect consumers and business concerns in our state.

Vocational Education. I have mentioned other aspects of education previously in this message, but want to point out that our vocational education program gives excellent training and schooling to hundreds of Colorado citizens making them self-supporting and self-respecting. Qualified workers in industry, in the home, in business, and on-the-farm are important to the future of Colorado.

Judiciary. The people recently adopted certain constitutional amendments relating to the judicial system, indicating deep concern over the crowded conditions of our courts and the inadequacy of judges' salaries. I recommend that you enact legislation to assure fair distribution of work loads in order that cases may be decided more promptly.

Parole Program. Colorado has made tremendous progress during the past two years in establishing a definite parole procedure for the inmates of our penal institutions. Rehabilitation of the parolee and assistance to him have been the essential goals. Legislation is needed to further improve the program, and I believe you should consider all aspects of our parole system for these improvements.

Reappraisal. I have noticed with apprehension and concern the many fears expressed over the Reappraisal Program.

Wherever and whenever injustices occur, I want to be made aware of them and I want you to be aware of them. It has been a tremendous program for Colorado, and we must

not jeopardize its benefits. You must study all implications, results, and necessary improvements to this statewide problem. I would urge your legislative committees to call in the State Tax Commission to have a thorough explanation of procedures, alleged discrepancies, and the future of this program. I am calling a special meeting of the commission this week for this same purpose. Nothing is more important to our state and its governmental function—on all levels—than the fair and just assessment of property.

Legislative Procedures. In my contacts with officials of other states, I have had occasion to hear about the benefits of improved legislative procedures. I am sure that you are ever aware of certain improvements which can be made. You have, in fact, shown your interest by the consolidation of legislative committees into a fewer number only last week. In all my discussions, invariably, we talk about the great advantages of a Legislative Council—established for the legislature, of the legislature, and by the legislature. I cannot help but think that an effective legislative council in Colorado would ease your task considerably and replace in part the jobs of your several legislative interim committees.

Although it may appear odd to discuss your Second Regular Session before this session gets under way, I believe it fair to give you a twelve-month warning as to my ideas for the next session. As you know, the 1952 General Assembly was our first annual meeting since a constitutional amendment so ordered. Other than budget and financial considerations, the Governor is the only official having any discretion in outlining additional subjects that may be given legislative consideration. Last year, all of us here reached certain conclusions about the value and benefit of such a session. These conclusions ranged from a belief that annual sessions were excellent to a belief that they were no good.

Now in all fairness to this new experiment in Colorado legislative history, it is my present desire to confine the 1954 session to financial problems only. I, therefore, warn you not to assume that problems which should be solved right now can be avoided and placed into the hopper in 1954. Also, the better you solve Colorado's financial problems in this current session, the less grief you will encounter in 1954.

Our opportunities to work together and to promote the general welfare of our great state are the true measure of our responsibility. We must be mutually interested in the enduring prosperity of one and a third million men, women, and children, rather than the transient pull of friendship or the meaningless fear of opposition.

I would urge you to keep in mind one time-honored and still important principle of government—the appraisal of government is not the amount of money spent but in the job accomplished.

Future generations will remember you and your works if you live up to the responsibilities placed upon you by the voters of this state. They will also remember you if you lack the courage and determination to meet and solve those problems. You and you alone can write the type of history by which you want to be remembered.

With Divine Guidance, let us work together, and work hard, at this business of good government. God bless you all.